PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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HOUSING FOR WORKERS, NOT BOSSES' PROFITS

LENNOX, CA, March 7—Working class tenants in an apartment complex in Los Angeles (LA) County have lit a fire under their profit-hungry slumlord! One-third of the tenants in these apartments have come together to demand immediate and necessary repairs, and to deduct future rent money to pay for the materials and labor cost of those repairs if the landlord continues to refuse to make them. The unity of Latin workers in the face of their racist landlord attempting to divide them, intimidate them, or buy them off bodes well for this struggle. It also reflects the growing numbers of workers who are fighting back against landlord abuses and evictions, and are also beginning to see the bigger picture of racist gentrification, homelessness, and the capitalist system that is behind these plagues on the working class.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members remain active in these battles. We have given CHALLENGE to a number of tenants. We have been open with them about the need for a revolutionary war by the working class to take down the capitalist system that enables these parasitic landlords. We have a great opportunity to explain why this deadly system that turns human needs like housing into commodities to be bought, sold, and made a profit from has to be destroyed and replaced with a communist system that distributes essentials based on need.

Under communism, with the elimination of the wage and money system, housing will be organized based on need. No more hotels and mansions sitting empty while workers live on the streets, shanty towns, tent cities, or dilapitated apartments. Repairs and improvements will be done collectively. No one will be without safe, adequate housing for themselves or their families.

As CHALLENGE readers will recall, PL'ers have been actively involved in the Lennox-Inglewood Tenants' Union (LITU). LITU organizers have engaged in a door-to-door campaign to bring workers together and get them involved. These efforts have not gone unnoticed by the property manager, who reported back to landlord Nick Murillo. In a vain attempt to stem LITU's organizing, slumlord Murillo told at least one tenant that he would be happy to make repairs if they would stop attending on-site meetings organized by LITU. That worker refused Murillo's sleazy offer!

"Under communism, with the elimination of the wage and money system, housing will be organized based on need. No more hotels and mansions sitting empty while workers live on the streets, shanty towns, tent cities, or decaying buildings".

Murillo, who owns numerous other buildings in LA County, has a history of half-ass fix-ups. This do-nothing attitude dovetails with his goal of squeezing as much profit as possible from his investments. Mold is painted over, not removed. Workers are told they must just deal with carpets infested with bed bugs and roaches. Leaky ceilings are patched up shoddily, making it only a matter of time before the water starts dripping again.

DO-nothing politicians

Calls to the LA County "Public Health" Department are worse than useless. Several tenants were able to get pictures of mice freely roaming their apartments. The inspector, who appeared with Murillo, was confronted with the recent date-stamped cell phone pictures of the mice. Her insulting response was, "Those pictures aren't evidence." The only evidence she would accept was an actual mouse sitting while she was present or rodent droppings! That same inspector, when shown a cracked front door that swells up after it rains and at times can't be opened from the inside, said nothing could be done about that safety risk!

One of the tenants and several LITU members attended a community meeting sponsored by LA County Board of Supervisors "progressive" Holly Mitchell. Mitchell's tactic is to make it appear she is responsive to resident complaints by having administrators from various county departments present to whom she can hand off responsibility. Then the particular administrator assigned the complaint either never gets back to the resident or tells the complaining resident there is nothing that can be done.

Tenants' leadership shows working class potential

Some workers have taken leadership, boldly asking the other tenants to post LITU signs in their apartment windows and by going door-to-door after each meeting to make sure everyone knows about the plans moving forward. LITU plans to encourage these tenants to set up a local leadership group that can build an ongoing tenants' association.

PLP will stay on this long road with the tenants, continuing to point out along the way all the roadblocks that the capitalist system inevitably throws up to discourage and deter class struggle.

The development of international class consciousness can unlock the untapped power of the working class, including working class tenants, to change the world. Revolutionary communist ideas combined with the lessons learned in these struggles and the growth of PLP can bring that enormous energy to fruition. ✪

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

One year of war in Ukraine

WORKERS MUST TURN THE GUNS AROUND!

One year ago, the simmering conflict between Russia and the U.S.-backed regime in Ukraine became an inter-imperialist shooting war. At the time, CHALLENGE wrote, "It's impossible to know how this war will ultimately play out, but we do know that small wars can lead to larger wars, particularly in volatile times." As tensions among the top imperialist powers escalate, with their economies in crisis and World War III looming, that prediction looks even more likely today.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has long warned that the capitalist profit system breeds ruthless and never-ending imperialist competition, battles waged with workers' blood. At the same time, violent shifts in the old world order create an opening for communist revolution, just as they did during World War I and after World War II.

The war in Ukraine has massacred hundreds of thousands of workers and displaced 14 million (PBS, 11/22/22). With supply chains for wheat exports disrupted, many millions more are going hungry, with Africa bearing the brunt (Reuters, 3/9).

As in all imperialist wars, workers have no side in this conflict. We have no class interest in fighting and dying for the capitalist rulers who sit and count their profits. For the international working class, victory will come only when we turn the guns around, smash all bosses, and build a communist world to serve workers' needs.

Wavering alliances

Despite demands by the U.S. that its allies fall in line, it no longer rules the roost. From India and Pakistan to Turkey, South Africa, and Brazil, regional capitalist powers are resisting Western calls to isolate and end critical trade with Russia.

India has openly defied U.S. calls to reduce Russian oil imports. When Russia's foreign minister spoke at an International Conference in India and attacked the U.S. and NATO for their wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, he was warmly applauded (Guardian, 3/4). China and Turkey have actually increased their imports of Russian oil, rendering U.S. sanctions mostly useless. More broadly, China has emerged as Russia's most important trading partner. The U.S. bosses now fear that China may tip the balance in Ukraine by supplying Russia with advanced weapons (BBC, 2/4).

While the U.S. media makes it sound like Ukraine has thwarted Russia militarily at every turn, Russia has in fact seized at least 116,000 square kilometers of Ukrainian territory, the equivalent of Bulgaria (CNN, 9/30/22). As the war drags on, the U.S. has justified concerns that even its closest friends may lack the appetite to continue. In Berlin, the capital of the U.S. bosses' most important ally, more than 10,000 marked the war's anniversary by marching against delivering more weapons to Ukraine (Reuters, 2/25). Wolfgang Ischinger, a senior German diplomat, called for the "immediate" initiation of "a peace process for Ukraine" (RT.com, 3/13).

The U.S. bosses rightly fear that an ascending China is using the conflict in Ukraine to keep chipping away at the old world order that the U.S. had dominated since 1945. China's latest initiative was to broker the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the most important powers in the oil-rich Middle East, a deal that left the U.S. on the outside looking in (NYT, 3/11).

U.S. rulers are further weakened by the division and instability in their own ranks. The bosses' finance capital main wing, fronted by Democrats from Joe Biden to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, are committed to protecting the profits of ExxonMobil, JPMorgan Chase, and other powerful multinational companies–at any cost. A contending faction, led by the likes of the Koch family, Rupert Murdoch, and a growing "America First" contingent of the Republican Party, is pushing to suspend all aid to Ukraine. One of Russia's big advantages is that its bosses are far more unified. Like China, it's gotten a headstart on the U.S. in moving toward full-blown fascism.

War-hungry U.S. media

Unlike the minimal U.S. media attention to recent wars in Yemen or Africa, where thousands of Black and Brown children have been murdered, the war in Ukraine and its blond, blue-eyed victims are splattered all over the front pages. This racist coverage also is designed to prepare U.S. workers to sacrifice in the next world war.

The bosses' media justify their round-the-clock focus on Ukraine by claiming that Russia's invasion was an unprovoked attack on an independent country's sovereignty. They never mention the eight NATO "battle groups" already stationed in Eastern Europe (NATO.int, 12/22), or that the U.S. helped to trigger the invasion by suggesting that Ukraine might be considered for inclusion in NATO, a longstanding "red line" that Russia would not allow to be crossed (Reuters, 12/21). Or that the U.S. itself has invaded 84 of the 193 countries recognized by the United Nations. So much for sovereignty!

The media is obsessed with Ukraine not because it represents a sovereign "democracy" standing up to tyranny, but because the U.S. bosses need to divide the international working class as they drive toward war and fascism. They know that their biggest threat is an organized, militant, international army of workers fighting to smash capitalism.

Fight back against imperialist warmakers!

As Russia and China continue to strengthen their alliance, a U.S. general recently predicted that the U.S. would be at war with China by 2025 (Time.com, 1/31). China's leader, Xi Jinping, recently targeted what he called a U.S.-led campaign of "encirclement and suppression." His new foreign minister said China had no choice but to fight back against U.S. sanctions (NYT, 3/9).

The current period contains both great danger and huge opportunity for the working class. The war in Ukraine demonstrates once again that wherever workers are attacked, it hurts our class brothers and sisters internationally. Whether it's boots-on-the-ground carnage, disrupted food supplies and medical care, or economic devastation, it's our class that has the most to lose under capitalism.

Only with communist revolution can we turn imperialist world war into class war against the capitalist parasites who put profits over human life. Only then can we build a world where wars, racism, and sexism will be eliminated for all time. Only communism can smash our chains, once and for all! ✪

Empowered by antiracism, fighters take on DA Gascon

Los Angeles, CA, March 28– For nearly three years the fightback and solidarity with the Flores family has deepened, which has given life to Progressive Labor Party in Los Angeles. With consistent protests over several years, the family has grown to see that this fight is bigger than any individual KKKop or reform policy. They are now actively organizing with other families to target the liberal fascist and George Soros-funded District Attorney, George Gascon. Gascon has a liberal cover, but he has a long cop career, from going along with racist "stop and frisk" policies to refusing to prosecute killer cops.

This has been controversial because Black Lives Matter (BLM) and other organizations have championed Gascon and given him a platform with impacted families where he's made promises to prosecute cops. Some families have illusions that targeting Gascon will hurt their court cases, so it is significant that other families have chosen to continue the fight. The Rodriguez family, who just won a $12.6 million settlement (read CHALLENGE, 2/15) is re-engaged in the struggle and specifically wants to go after Gascon. They have asked the Party, together with the Flores family and three other impacted families, to organize with them and start up this collective.

Democratic Party liberals support killer cops

We are planning our first action in a couple of weeks and at our first meeting, we talked about the politics surrounding Gascon and the reform struggle in general. We discussed that despite the election of a so-called progressive D.A. and passage of state legislation like the California Act to Save Lives on the use of deadly force, which took effect in 2020, none of it has led to any prosecutions of any KKKops. When we drafted up our first flier, we criticized not only the local liberals but also Democratic Party misleaders across the country who continue to expand their already bloated police budgets. We called out former "Top Cop" VP Kamala Harris, for having the nerve to show her face and let alone speak at the funeral of Tyree Nichols, who was beaten to death by Black Memphis KKKops. When it was shared among the families, the aunt of a young Latin worker who was also beaten to death in Orange County said, "I wouldn't change one word!"

Gascon has long been connected to the liberal ruling class in California. First, he spent three decades rising through the ranks of one the most murderous police departments in the world, the Los Angeles Police Department. He went from LAPD recruiter to Assistant Chief and was once called "the right arm" of racist "stop and frisk" Bill Bratton. Then under the auspices of then-Mayor Gavin Newson, who has political and family ties with the billionaire Getty family that was built on violent extraction of oil in the Middle East. He was appointed Chief of Police of San Francisco in 2009. In just two years, without any legal experience, Newsom then appointed him to Los Angeles District Attorney, following the footsteps of now VP "Top Cop" Kamala Harris.

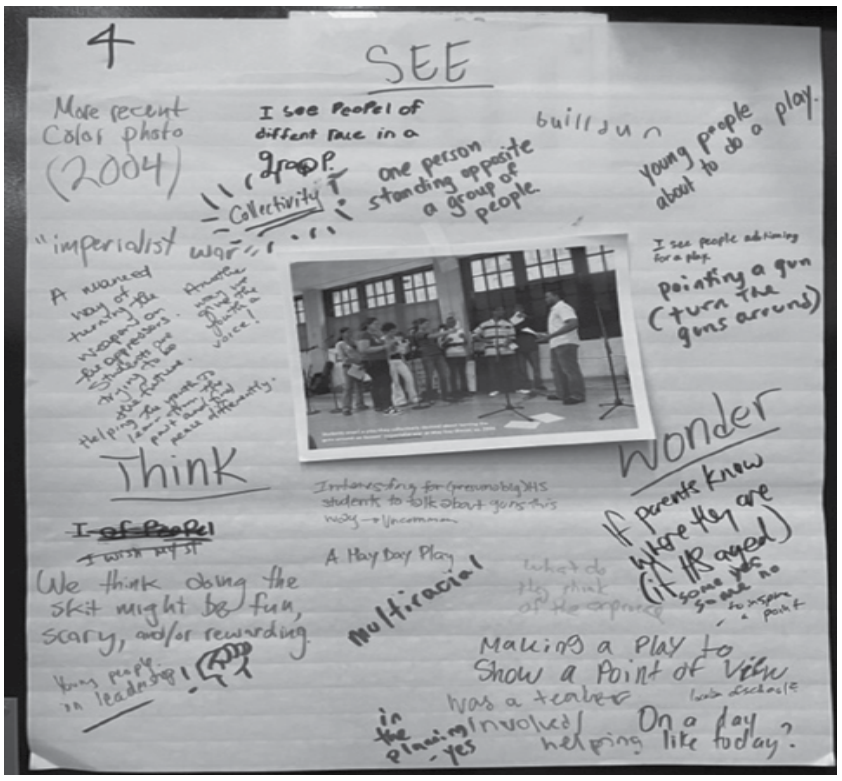
His liberal fascism was exposed when his rhetoric was countered by his practice of refusing to prosecute killer cops in San Francisco which even inspired Colin Kaepernick and other NFL players to take a knee in response. It also inspired impacted families and activists to protest against him at his home and run him out of the Bay area, only to be championed by BLM-LA and others.

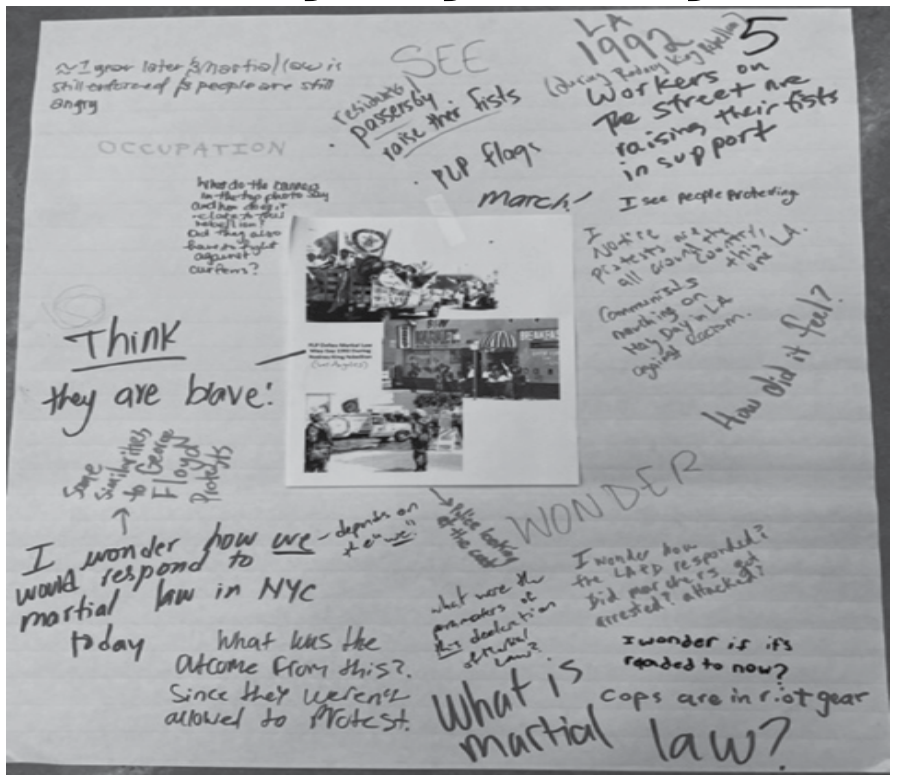
It's a long haul, but only communism means real justice

While all of these families recognize that the whole system is racist and guilty of murder, we still have a way to go to win them away from reformism and liberal-led organizations. Real justice can only come from the dismantling of capitalism and the capitalist state through communist revolution and joining Progressive Labor Party. However, many families understand that it has been our Party and our leadership that has always been honest and upfront with our politics and consistent in the protests in the streets. We know this is a lifelong struggle, and they have confidence that we will be with them for the long haul. One of the Flores siblings is in a Party club and considers herself a communist. She is bold and has pushed families to begin targeting Gascon and has won her younger sister to join our collective! With her leadership, the future of the working class is bright! ✪

Fight to Learn, Learn to Fight!

A look at PLP's Communist May Day History


4
SEE
More recent Color photo (2004)
I see People of different race in a group.
Collectivity
one person standing opposite a group of people.
building
young people about to do a play.
"imperialist war"
A nuanced way of turning the weapons of the oppressor to the students to the future.
Another way of using the phone as a voice!
helping the students learn and think about things differently.
I see people advancing for a play.
pointing a gun (turn the guns around)
Think
Interesting for (presumably) HS students to talk about gun violence
Wonder
If parents know where they are (if IRaged)
some yes no
A May Day Play
Multiracial
What do they think of the original
I of People!
We think doing the skit might be fun, scary, and/or rewarding.
Young people in leadership!
Making a Play to Show a Point of View
was a teacher
in the planning/ involved
yes
helping
On a day like today?


SEE
I grow later & martial law is still enforced & people are still angry
residents passersby raise their fists
OCCUPATION
PLP flags
March
LA 1992 (Rodney King Riots)
5
Workers on the street are raising their fists in support
I see people protesting
Think
they are brave!
some similarities to George Floyd protests
I wonder how we would respond to martial law in NYC today
depends on context
What kind of outcome from this? Since they weren't allowed to protest.
WONDER
I wonder how the LAPD responded? Did many of them get arrested? attacked?
I wonder if it's needed to now?
What is martial law?
cops are in riot gear

Youth take turns seeing, thinking, and wondering about May Day and communism

BROOKLYN, NY, March 11–As part of our monthly series preparing for May Day 2023, a multiracial group of over 30 students, parents, teachers, and workers engaged in a sampling of historic May Day events led by Progressive Labor Party (PLP) since our party resurrected the holiday in the U.S. in 1971.

The common threads of revolutionary communist boldness, creativity, militant class struggle, confidence in the working class, and our ever-evolving line of dictatorship of the proletariat and fighting directly for communism, and our uncompromising antiracism and multiracial workers' unity, was all in full display over a series of events we studied.

See-Think-Wonder about May Day!

After an icebreaker, we took a gallery walk in groups around the room, looking at images over several decades of May Day marches and demonstrations, each person commenting on what they "see, think, and wonder" on chart paper (see photo). Here are some initial reactions of participants:

"Seems very militant and organized,"

"I love the bold/ambitious vision: building a worldwide movement,"

"They are brave!"

"What is martial law?"

"Workers on the streets waving their fists in support,"

"They must have been so disciplined and organized in the days before cell phones,"

"How did they plan this?"

"We need this in every city!"

May Day through the decades

Then, each group sat down to investigate one of the May Day events depicted in the photos—as one comrade observed—reflecting larger struggles PLP had been involved in for quite some time.

- **1974** – PLP organized a nationwide motorcade (including workers from Canada) that originated in almost a dozen cities, traveling to over a dozen more, organizing scores of rallies and demonstrations around factories, universities, and communities where the Party was actively organizing, and converging in Washington, D.C. for a grand May Day march. Marchers represented 30 U.S. cities and almost 30 different countries.
- **1975** – As part of a long campaign to smash a rising fascist group called ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights) in Boston, PLP mounted a valiant and victorious defense of our May

Continued on page 4

Fight to Learn, Learn to Fight

Get ready for May Day!

Continued from page 3

Parents, students, and teachers collectively study the history of the Progressive Labor Party and May Day.

Day march against a physical attack by racist ROAR thugs, backing up our revolutionary communist ideas with disciplined and organized physical force en route to destroying ROAR as an organization forever.

- **1979** – PLP went on the offensive to rout Nazis from Marquette Park in Chicago, which had outlawed Black/non-white workers from as far back as anyone could remember. Following a military-style antiracist/communist-led raid on Nazi headquarters just a month before, PLP's bold contingent led hundreds of multiracial workers to actively integrate the park once and for all, breaking the back of Nazi organizing efforts.
- **1992**–Amidst open antiracist rebellion by Black, Latin, and white workers in response to the sham Rodney King verdict (a Black man brutalized by a gang of racist LAPD thugs), the rulers declared martial law in Los Angeles, banning all demonstrations. But PLP didn't let that stop us from boldly carrying out a May Day caravan through Los Angeles, defying the law, outwitting cops, and engaging hundreds of workers, youth, and National Guard soldiers with communism and militant antiracism.
- **2002**–In the wake of the 9/11 attacks and Patriot Act crackdowns on protests and in the throes of rising fascism and imperialist war in Afghanistan, PLP boldly and creatively planned spirited May Day marches and dinners in multiple locations to confidently put forward our communist line and allow workers to participate in our international holiday.

Group participants actively debated our line and our practice to more deeply understand each event, its time period, and lessons for building the communist movement today.

In our share-out, commenting on the prominent multiracial character of our demonstrations and vital Black and Latin leadership throughout our Party's history, one young participant made the point that these events obliterate the ruling class's racist anti-communist lie that the communist movement is "white" or that communism is for "whites only." One of the large banners highlighted in one of the marches punctuated the point by proclaiming "Racism Hurts All Workers."

The presence of some high school students with their parents reflected PLP's dedication to building a student-parent-teacher alliance in the schools.

Confidence in our class

These historic events on the whole also showed the development of PLP's line through the years, advancing from advocating for "Socialism" in the '60s, '70s, and '80s to fighting directly for communism over the last 35 years. Our long experience leading class struggle proved to us that workers are open to communist ideas.

In fact, studying these events, one can see how when we have confidence in the working class—that they would defend their homes from the fascists, that they would take the offensive against racist and sexist divisions, that they would travel across the country for communism, defy the bosses' laws, even defend our party's line with revolutionary violence when necessary—we grew as an organization capable of leading the working class to victory.

Indeed, the only way to guarantee the dictatorship of the proletariat (working class) in the long run is to fight directly for communism now.

BIG, BOLD COMMUNIST MAY DAY 2023!

After our share-out, participants shared their ideas for a May Day theme for this year's NYC march. Some of our ideas included "Capitalism Divides Workers—Fight Back with Revolutionary Communist Optimism!" "Resilient Rebels on the Road to Revolution," "Getting Ready for Revolt/Revolution," and "Fight Capitalist Divisions with Communist Internationalism."

People left the forum inspired! Now we must use our newfound understanding to inspire our friends to learn and participate in this proud communist, anti-racist, working-class heritage, for we—all of us—are making history, and EVERYTHING we do counts. ✪

Letter from Kurdish communist

Bury bosses under rubble of their racist system

Recently, a Kurdish comrade from Turkey came to our Progressive Labor Party (PLP) club meeting to report on the devastating earthquake that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions of Turkish, Kurdish and Syrian workers, youth and children. He is a member of the CUNY Professional Staff Congress, the National Writers Union, and the Labor Party of Turkey (EMEP).

On February 6th, back-to-back 7.7 and 7.6 earthquakes hit eleven provinces, home to 13.5 million people. Thousands of buildings collapsed. As of February 24, the official death toll is more than 44,000, and this only reflects reports from hospital morgues. Thousands of people are still missing, and authorities say that more than two million people have been displaced.

The bosses fear the masses and don't want to mobilize workers and youth into a mass rescue and rebuilding effort. Communism would do exactly the opposite, we mobilize our class to provide aid and help to rebuild areas affected by natural disasters.

While earthquakes may be a natural event, death, and destruction are not! They are a result of the greed of the profit system. All the ruined buildings were built by construction companies and monopolies using cheap and low-quality construction material. Safety was never a concern for them, even as Turkey sits on fault lines that cause earthquakes. In 1999, there was another big earthquake. Like now, the government did not send proper aid to the disaster zone. Instead, workers, socialists, trade unions, and mass organizations brought aid to Düzce and set up camps. The government sent riot police to attack the aid tents and then sent "aid." Since then, communists and organizers have continued to fight back.

After 1999, the state passed an "earthquake" tax to prepare for future disasters. The amount of money collected in the last 24 years would save thousands of lives today. But the bosses used it for their ends.

Turkish President Erdogan's first response was not to rush aid to the victims but to declare a state of emergency. There was no government relief effort for days, especially in the provinces of Hatay and Antakya.While people under the rubble were still tweeting their addresses, the government blocked Twitter to suppress live feeds of the devastation and opposition voices. After a public outburst, Twitter was unblocked, and almost 20,000 troops were deployed, but even then, soldiers were not directly involved in clearing the rubble and rescuing victims. Due to this capitalist incompetence, many victims died from hypothermia since the region experienced a harsh winter. Many people could not even find shroud cloths to cover their dead.

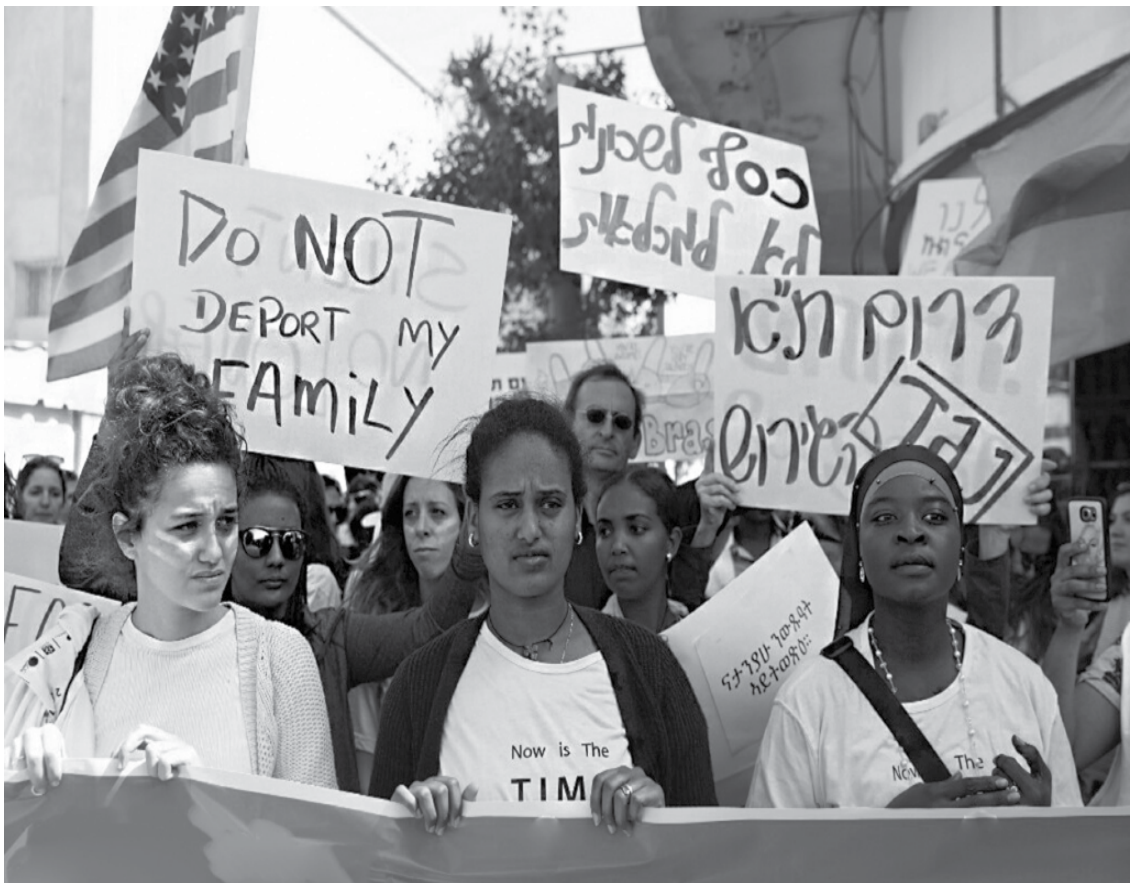
The state of emergency is aimed at attacking left-wing and progressive, mass organizations who rushed to set up relief efforts and camps for the victims. The government wants to counter class rage and solidarity. When working people act in solidarity, it boosts class confidence ."

We say NO to fascist provocations, and YES to the unity of Turkish, Kurdish and Syrian workers! We stand with workers and youth in Syria, fighting against racism and lynching that have been organized by fascist and counter-insurgency organizations. Racism is poisonous to our class. The working class has one option in confronting capitalist barbarism: our unity!

We will win. We will win with the understanding that working people do not deserve this. We will clean this blood and dust together. And we will hold the bosses accountable for this destructive capitalist massacre. We know who the murderers are. The day is coming when the racist rulers will be buried under the rubble of their system as the workers come to power. ✪

International Working Women's Day

To defeat sexism, destroy capitalism



Women workers in Israel lead protests against racist deportations, seperating migrant families.

Bourgeois feminism and the movement of proletarian women are two fundamentally different social movements."— Clara Zetkin, Die Gleichheit (Equality)

March 8 marks the 114th International Working Women's Day since its initial celebration by NYC garments workers in 1909.

The struggle for working-class women was inextricably linked to the open call for overthrowing the czarist government. Today, working-class women's demands are filtered into reforms that benefit bosses and their ruling-class servants. Still working women around the world are at the helm of class struggle, defying the bosses sexist and racist divisions.

From Baltimore to Brooklyn to Los Angeles to Haiti, women are leading the fightback against racist police terror and attacks on healthcare.

From Afghanistan to Russia, working women militantly defied the sexist national bosses and marched against imperialist violence.

The Progressive Labor Party fights to smash capitalism along with its special oppression against women that hurts all workers. Sexism relegates women to reproductive labor, such as cooking, cleaning, and care work, promotes sexist culture that cheapens, degrades, enables the exploitation and abuse of women as sexual objects, and ultimately pits men and women against each other, driving the global epidemic of femicide.

Across the capitalist imperialist world, the leadership and militancy of women, particularly Black women, is essential if we want to break free from the chains of capitalist oppression. Women workers—not "girl bosses"—should run the world alongside the multiracial, multi-gendered international working class.

How it began

International Working Women's Day (IWWD) began in New York as "Women's Day," organized by the Socialist Party of America. After the strike of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in 1909, women met at the international meeting of communist and socialist leaders, the Second International of 1910. They proposed establishing an International Women's Day to commemorate their comrades in the U.S. By 1911, more than a million workers were celebrating IWWD.

We can also look to find lessons from the two great communist revolutions. The Soviet revolution was rooted in a firm rejection of sexism, from an early pamphlet by Lenin to struggles for more collective living experiments and job opportunities for women workers. Thirty years later, the Chinese revolution also began with an aggressive struggle to free women workers, most of them in agriculture, from the feudal oppression that had enslaved them. After both of these revolutions, important social and economic roles—including positions as doctors, teachers, and engineers--were opened to women workers as sexist notions of their "natural inferiority" were attacked. Divorce and abortion were made freely available. Relics of feudalism, such as the cruel binding of young women's feet in China, were enthusiastically abolished.

Although sexism predates capitalism, all social relations under class societies like capitalism were always predicated on the idea of preserving private property and maximizing exploitation. Sexism, the special oppression of women, justifies dividing men and women into specific gender roles. Sexist divisions generate superprofits for the capitalists, oppress and objectify half the working-class population, in an attempt to paralyze any working-class unity.

International Working Women's Day belongs to the working class. Help build one world, one party for all workers by taking the lead in fights against police terror, exploitative landlords, and bosses. Painting banks pink and electing women politicians to a government that maintains the super-exploitation of women workers is far from the answer. Reformist solutions—such as more "democracy"—will not end sexism. Under capitalism, they will only incentivize individuals to strive for their self-interest, the selfish, me-first thinking enshrined by capitalism.

Only by destroying the wage system can we bring an end to sexism. Only then will the profit system's dogma--"Every man or woman for themselves"—be replaced by the communist principle, "To each according to need." Only then will collective behavior overcome the selfish me-first thinking enshrined by capitalism.

A world led by PLP

Progressive Labor Party's deep commitment to seeing a world beyond the shallow gaze of identity politics is one of the tenets of our Party's line. Working class women are leading fights against the bosses' racist and sexist attacks worldwide, including the recent nurse strike in New York City, protests against sexist political violence in Haiti, and battling sexist attacks in Iran against women who refuse to wear hijabs. Working women's power will be self-evident in a communist world, as they will be giving leadership in the fight against sexism. In a world led by millions of communists in the PLP, we have the basis for living an egalitarian life free from capitalist chains.

It is PLP's obligation to expose and explain that women's liberation doesn't come from voting, or electing women politicians to oppress us, or expanding the ranks of women CEOs to exploit us. ✪

For a deeper look at sexism, see PL magazine article "ONLY COMMUNIST REVOLUTION CAN END SEXISM" at www.plp.org/plmagazine

Turkey: anti-sexism or feminism?

In Istanbul, Turkey, the riot police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters celebrating International Working Women's Day. Even in the face of mass destruction from recent earthquakes, these women in Turkey remind us as antisexist, antiracist fighters worldwide, that working women are essential for a better world.

The Turkish government took a drastic turn to use religious fundamentalism to justify sexism and squelch the potential for women to live beyond the constraints of a society that supports harmful marriages and patronizing relationships between men and women. Turkish women are refusing to be silenced and are demanding an end to President Erdogon's regime amidst complete negligence after the catastrophic earthquakes.

However, this reform obscures the Turkish bosses' role in a rapidly declining liberal world order. Once a U.S. junior partner Turkey, desperate to compete and enjoy the imperialist spoils Russia, is now a willing pawn of the ascendant Chinese bosses.Fascist bosses use identity puppet politicians to further capitalist terror as feminist misleaders. The Turkish opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu is spreading false promises that under his misleadership, a strong democracy will follow. He is riding on the mishandling of the recent earthquakes under the current regime, the dwindling democracy, and overall mistrust from the workers.

However, we know that no capitalist boss will end sexism and that no elected president can ever grant workers freedom. The women-led protests in Istanbul show workers we need fierce fighters to end this sexist system.

At the same time, we must confront the dangers of feminism. The capitalist women's movement both divides the working class by gender and promotes a false unity with the liberal wing of the U.S. ruling class, basically the Democratic Party.

Like all identity politics, the women's movement is a dead—and deadly—end for workers. It obscures the fact that capitalist society is driven by a fundamental conflict between the class that owns the means of production and the class that creates everything of value—between bosses and workers.

Feminism misleads women workers, in particular, by recruiting sell-out stooges like Hillary Clinton, Kamala Harris, and the late (and unlamented!) Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Women's liberation doesn't come from voting, or electing women politicians to oppress us, or expanding the ranks of women CEOs to exploit us.

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

The fight for Hadi, a nail on the bosses' coffin

Last summer a teenager, Hadi Abuatelah of the Chicago suburb of Oak Lawn, was riding in a car stopped by the kkkops who said they smelled marijuana. Hadi ran in fear of the cop who tackled him and beat him around the head and body very severely. As a result, he had a brain bleed and injuries to his body. To this date, Hadi still has difficulty walking.

Watching the video, it is amazing that he survived this vicious attack! Initially, the three cops involved were going to get off. Since last summer, a multiracial group of dozens of workers and youth have attended the monthly Oak Lawn police and fire board meetings to demand the cops be brought up on charges. Finally, only one of the three cops has been charged.

Hadi, his family, and the majority of the leading organizers of the coalition are from Palestine. One can't help but note the parallels of racist attacks here in Oak Lawn with the fascist Zionist regime of Israel.

A recent board meeting tried to impose a more fascist approach to the proceedings now that one of the officers is facing indictment. Several kkkop thugs and their buddies attempted to monopolize the meeting and build support by showing videos depicting violence against the police. After a few minutes of this "copaganda," the multiracial coalition supporting Hadi started chanting to stop the video. The klan-in-blue was again forced to back down.

The struggle in Oak Lawn continues. Clearly, it's not a question of "a few bad apples." Police exist to instill terror against the working class and guarantee that the capitalist system continues its quest for maximum profits. The fight back to support Hadi is like a nail in the bosses' coffin. Building an egalitarian communist society requires struggles like these to ultimately succeed.

★★★★★

Nature of union leaders and confidence in workers

The January 18th article "Lessons From Historic Nursing Strike in a Time of Growing Fascism" was very poignant in pointing out the contradictions of the St. Vincent Hospital nurses strike against Tenet. However, I took issue with the subtitle that was added to the article entitled: "Union sells workers down the river."Although there were strengths and weaknesses in the strike, I don't believe your statement to be a true characterization of the union. Here are some reasons why: The union fought for the nurses, and none of them went back to work unless they all went back. They were out for a year in wind, rain, snow and heat. Rank and file nurses who worked in the hospital, not just those on the union payroll, were on the bargaining team. After the strike ended, they had to reapply for their jobs and fight

Historic nurses' strike ended after 10 months in Worcester,MA

the state about paying back their unemployment insurance. They beat back the Right to Work Foundation, which tried to decertify their union, and they won! Now this is not to say that the role of the unions is not pro-capitalist and continues to rely on the Democratic Party and their politicians. However, as someone who was able to work with one of the nurses on the bargaining committee, your subtitle was disheartening.

There are limits working within the trade union movement and our role is to push past these limits, and politicize the rank and file, and fight ideologically for communist leadership of the unions, as much as possible. We apply theory and practice, as is the case in all of our struggles. Strikes are difficult to organize and sustain. Would it have been possible for the MNA leadership to organize the entire nation-wide membership of National Nurses United (NNU) to strike in solidarity with St. Vincent's nurses and organize health care workers in all of Tenet's facilities across the country? That would have been a historic feat. The fight for safe staffing which saves lives is the same fight as the nurses in the recent New York City nurses' strike. However, the nurses in Worcester were up against Tenet, a nationwide for- profit Healthcare chain.

All in all, I thought this important to share with you because the subtitle that the editorial staff added put a real damper on my willingness to show this great article to the nurses, and others who organized and helped to support the strike. Many workers and other nurses across the country were inspired by the St. Vincent nurses strike. After recently speaking with our leadership collective, I have since distributed this issue to our base, to get their feedback and to my surprise several folks said they found the article to be inspiring and did not notice the subtitle. The role of the pro-capitalist nature of the union leadership is clearly explained in the article. I think they clearly agreed with that.

La lucha continua!

★★★★★

Avatar: the problem with 'purpose' of art

In the March 1, 2023 issue of CHALLENGE, there is an astute review of the blockbuster film "Avatar 2." The review acknowledges how the film plays to a romantic notion of classless utopia but, in fact, ends up reinforcing racist notions of species difference and divesting ordinary people of the power to change the world. It is at once aspirational and defeatist. The review's analysis is a dialectical and thoughtful piece of Marxist cultural criticism, a welcome presence in the pages of the paper.

The argument is weakened, however, by the proposition that "the purpose of art under capitalism is to reinforce the ideas that help the rulers to maintain their power while degrading the working class, so that we believe we are powerless and incapable of transforming or running society." There are two problems here. (1) How can this square with the laudatory commentaries in this series on the writings of Langston Hughes, who is praised for his commitment to producing literary works calling for a revolution? Wasn't he creating "art under capitalism?" (2) More importantly, this formulation confuses "function" with "purpose." "Purpose" implies conscious intentionality, meaning that writers and screenwriters try their best to mislead working-class readers and audiences, turning them into passive recipients of ruling-class ideology. "Function" would be a clearer formulation, suggesting that the objective effect of most literature and film produced under capitalism is to confirm dominant ideologies, without the writer/screenwriter necessarily or consciously intending this effect.

Asserting "purpose" rather than "function" actually weakens a communist analysis of how life under capitalism spontaneously gives rise to ideas and attitudes supportive of the status quo. At times there is conscious ruling-class intervention in the propagation of dominant ideologies, as is shown by current attempts by Florida Governor DeSantis to outlaw the teaching of antiracism. But more often capitalism's ability to reproduce dominant ideologies as "common sense"—what we all just know to be true--is far more toxic. As Karl Marx noted, "The dominant ideas in any age are the ideas of the ruling class." This "dominance" is achieved not primarily through intentional brainwashing, but through passing along—through art and literature, as well as everyday life—unquestioned and seemingly natural assumptions about what it means to be a social being. Common sense is much harder to combat than conscious ideological conspiracy. In its criticisms of cultural works, CHALLENGE should not make these issues seem to be simpler than they are.

★★★★★

GLOSSARY

COMMUNIST TERMS

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Langston Hughes and the Spanish Civil War

Continued from page 8

and involved such famous cultural figures as Richard Wright, Paul Robeson, and Elizabeth Catlett. Though Hughes always worked collectively, he was singled out for racist criticism and red-baiting, not to mention surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Fighting fascism with communist internationalism

In the mid-1930s, Hughes wrote and produced plays about Black working-class life and the importance of multiracial unity, such as When the Jack Hollers. But the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini in 1935—a pure act of racist aggression—turned the attention of Black workers to worldwide racism and fascism, the phase of capitalism when the bosses discard their charade of liberal democracy (see Glossary, p. 6). Black newspapers like the Amsterdam News reported weekly on Ethiopia.

Then, in 1936, came the Spanish Civil War, when General Francisco Franco and his armies rebelled against the leftist Popular Front government, supported by communists, socialists, and anarchists. Nazi Germany and fascist Italy sent arms and planes to Franco. The Spanish "Republican" government appealed to the U.S., France, and Great Britain for aid. But not surprisingly, the capitalist bosses wanted nothing to do with it. By contrast, the Soviet Union sent aid and established International Brigades for workers of all nations to join. Thousands of workers from the U.S., Black and white, many of them communists, enlisted in the famous Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Within the U.S., communists raised funds for the war effort against the fascists. Hughes helped organize the American Writers and Artists Ambulance Corps, which bought an ambulance for the bloody campaign.

The International Workers Order, another communist-organized organization, sent Hughes on a 12-city tour to raise more aid for the anti-fascists in Spain. The IWO published a A New Song, a booklet of 17 political poems by Hughes, including "Let America Be America Again," "Justice," "Chant for Tom Mooney," "Chant for May Day," "Ballads of Lenin," and "Open Letter to the South." In "Song of Spain," Hughes moves from images of bullfights and flamenco guitarists to the grim realities of wary.

Hughes subsequently went to Spain himself to send back wartime dispatches to the Baltimore Afro-American and other Black news agencies. En route he stopped in Paris to deliver a rousing speech, "Too Much of Race," to the International Writers Congress. It included these communist ideas: "We represent the end of race. And the Fascists know that when there is no more race, there will be no more capitalism, and no more war, and no more money for the munition makers, because the workers of the world will have triumphed" (Brian Dolinar, The Black Cultural Front: Black Writers and Artists of the Depression Generation, p. 90). Hughes understood that capitalism absolutely requires racism to exploit and divide the working class.

Langston Hughes writer, poet, antiracist organizer, and communist

In July 1937, Hughes crossed over the French Pryenees into northern Spain and then to Barcelona and Valencia. By August he was in Madrid, where he joined Communist Party USA members in the Lincoln Brigade and interviewed Black volunteers for his dispatches. When he traveled outside the city, communists helped arrange his tours. During his four months in Madrid, Hughes circulated among other writers hunkered down in the besieged city, including Ernest Hemingway, Malcolm Cowley, and Lillian Hellman. The great singer Paul Robeson also came to give concerts for the anti-fascist cause.

Hughes red lit torch: fight for communism –workers' power

As historian Brian Dolinar has observed, "Hughes explained to Black readers how the fight against fascism was connected to the fight against racism at home" (Dolinar, p. 87). His essays "Laughter in Madrid," (published in The Nation, January 29, 1938), voiced admiration for workers' courage and their resistance to fascist rule: "Yes, people still laugh in Madrid. In this astonishing city of bravery and death, where the houses run right up to the trenches and some of the street-car lines stop only at the barricades, people still laugh, children play in the streets...Madrid, dressed in bravery and laughter; knowing death and the sound of guns day and night, but resolved to live, not die!" Back in the U.S., Hughes advocated for the Double V campaign, the connected struggles against racism in the U.S. and fascism in Europe.

In his journalism, poetry, plays, and essays, Hughes brilliantly conveyed the experiences of ordinary workers who strived to unite as a force for history. Progressive Labor Party can carry on Hughes' legacy when we lead the way toward multiracial unity and revolution. ✪

[Biographical information is drawn from Arnold Rampersad, T*he Life of Langston Hughes,* 2 vols. 2nd edition, New York: Oxford, 2002; and Brian Dolinar, *The Black Cultural Front: Black Writers and Artists of the Depression Generation,* Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.]

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Chinese imperialists work on empire building

New York Times, 3/11–Finally, there is a peace deal of sorts in the Middle East…between Saudi Arabia and Iran…brokered...by China…Alliances and rivalries that have governed diplomacy for generations have…been upended. The Americans, who have been the central actors in the Middle East for the past three-quarters of a century, almost always the ones in the room where it happened, now find themselves on the sidelines during a moment of significant change. The Chinese, who for years played only a secondary role in the region, have suddenly transformed themselves into the new power player. And the Israelis, who have been courting the Saudis against their mutual adversaries in Tehran, now wonder where it leaves them. "There is no way around it — this is a big deal," said Amy Hawthorne, deputy director for research at the Project on Middle East Democracy, a nonprofit group in Washington.

"Yes,the United States could not have brokered such a deal right now with Iran specifically, since we have no relations. But in a larger sense, China's prestigious accomplishment vaults it into a new league diplomatically and outshines anything the U.S. has been able to achieve in the region since Biden came to office."

Israeli bosses continue expansion into West Bank

France24, 3/12–Israeli soldiers shot dead three Palestinian gunmen after they fired at troops in the occupied northern West Bank near Nablus, the army said on Sunday, as violence in the region continued…The soldiers, members of the elite infantry Golani reconnaissance unit, grabbed three M-16 rifles and a pistol used by the Palestinians, the army said…Violence intensified last year, but has worsened in the West Bank since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to office in December in a governing coalition with ultra-Orthodox Jewish and extreme-right allies…Netanyahu…has vowed to continue the expansion of West Bank settlements…Since the start of the year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has claimed the lives of 81 Palestinian adults and children, including militants and civilians. Twelve Israeli civilians, including three children and one policeman, as well as one Ukrainian civilian have been killed over the same period…

China bosses aspire to run the world

Al Jazeera, 3/13–President Xi Jinping…thanked the delegates for giving him a third term and promised to "take the needs of the country as my mission, and the interests of the people as my yardstick", according to the AFP news agency. "Security is the bedrock of development, while stability is a prerequisite for prosperity. "We must fully promote the modernisation of national defence and the armed forces, and build the people's armed forces into a Great Wall of steel that effectively safeguards national sovereignty, security and development interests.The trust of the people is the greatest driving force pushing me forward, and also a heavy responsibility on my shoulders," he said. "The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has entered an irreversible historical process."...and reiterated that Taiwan was part of China.

The Great Game is on …in DR Congo

Der Spiegel, 2/9–In the faded Grande Salle of Manono, a small town in the Democratic Republic of Congo located a two-day drive from the nearest big city, the focus is on global politics. The question is: Who should be allowed access to the minerals of the future located in the earth below their feet? "The Chinese," or "the people from the West?"... According to geologists, though, the earth beneath Manono contains what might be the largest lithium deposit in the world. Completely untouched… Some have even said that control of Manono will translate to control over the global market price of lithium…the Congolese government does, in fact, have ambitious plans and has even established a battery research center at a university in the country. For now, though the focus continues to be on who holds sway over the world's largest lithium deposits.

ART FOR ANTIRACISTS

LANGSTON HUGHES AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Langston Hughes, Soviet journalist Mikhail Koltsov, Ernest Hemingway, Cuban poet and journalist Nicolás Guillén in Madrid, 1937

Song of Spain
By Langston Hughes

A bombing plane's
The song of Spain.
Bullets like rain's
The song of Spain.
Poison gas is Spain.
A knife in the back
And its terror and pain is Spain.
…
The people are Spain
The people beneath that bombing plane….
Workers, make no bombs again!
Workers, mine no gold again!
Workers, lift no hand again
To build up profits for the rape of Spain!
Workers, see yourselves as Spain!
…
I must drive the bombers out of Spain!
I must drive the bombers out of the world!
I must take the world for my own again—
A workers' world
Is the song of Spain.

The last issue of CHALLENGE (3/15/23) revisited Langston Hughes work in the 1920s and 1930s, the period when Hughes became inspired by the growing multiracial, anti-capitalist fightback, gravitating to communist politics. In this piece we dive into Hughes political and literary contributions to the anti-fascist movement during the Spanish Civil War.

Langston Hughes, a major 20th-century literary figure, moved significantly to the left in the mid-1930s—as a poet, playwright, and journalist. At a time when imperialist fascism in Italy and Germany brought on the invasion of Ethiopia (1935-37) the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), and eventually World War II (1939-1945), Hughes became one of the world's leading communist and antiracist voices.

Poems and plays: fighting racism with multiracial unity

In 1933, after more than a year in the Soviet Union, Hughes returned to California and probably his favorite subject: the working class of the U.S. He joined a group of writers and artists active in the local Communist Party (CP)-affiliated John Reed Club, named after the communist journalist and activist who covered the Bolsheviks' October Revolution in 1917. Still involved in protests to free the Scottsboro Eight, he composed "One More 'S' in the USA," a song for a CP fundraiser for the Scottsboro victims of the capitalists' criminal injustice system. He also co-wrote a play, never produced, called "Blood on the Fields," about a strike by agricultural workers in the San Joaquin Valley.

Beyond his local activities, Hughes joined national organizations to foster multiracial unity by bringing leading Black writers and intellectuals into dialogue and actions with communists. He became president of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, which evolved into the National Negro Congress

Continued on page 7

NEXT DEADLINE

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is the

Friday night of March 24th

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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